

Two decades of

- 1997** Dr. John Osmun
Bob Russell
Dan Stout
- 1998** Bill Brehm
Bill Buettner
Charlie Hromada
J.E. Sameth
- 1999** Stanley Baker
Norm Cooper
Norm Ehmann
Otto Orkin
- 2000** J.J. Davis
Harry Katz
Rufus "Red" Tindol Jr.
Clayton "Bud" Wright
- 2001** Mel Edelstein
Tom Evans
Solomon Rose
Vern Walter
- 2002** Al Cossetta
Bob & Judy Dold
Dr. Austin Frishman
Dr. Lee Truman
- 2003** Dr. Walter Ebeling
Dr. Ralph Heal
Dr. Doug Mampe
Mark Weisburger
- 2004** Dr. Paul Müller
Dr. Phil Spear
Malcolm Stack
Blanton Whitmire
- 2005** Bob Jenkins Sr.
Paul Hardy
Jerry Mix
Hal Stein
- 2006** Dr. Gary Bennett
Truly Wheatfield Nolen
Bill Spitz
Jim Steckel
- 2007** Roy Ashton
Arnold Mallis
Ada & Millard Oldham
Dr. Mike Rust



celebration

PMP

Hall of Famers



We've honored 83 industry titans, and will induct four more in October.

By Heather Gooch | Editor

In 1996, the *Pest Management Professional* Industry Hall of Fame was conceived as a yearbook — a way to remind and educate the industry about its leaders and pioneers past and present. By the time we inducted the first class during the Purdue Pest Control Conference in January 1997, it had morphed into a black-tie dinner celebration.

Although each year's induction ceremony has offered a slight twist on the ones that precede it, the *PMP* Hall of Fame has never lost its focus of celebrating the accomplishments and lives of the best the industry has to offer. In Seattle on Oct. 17 — the eve before the NPMA's PestWorld kicks off — we'll induct four more industry icons: **Dr. Vernard Lewis, Dick Sameth, Larry Treleven** and the late **Vern Toblan**.

COMING SOON FROM PMP MAGAZINE:
Titans of Industry: How 87 PMP Hall of Famers helped change and grow professional pest management

To commemorate the 20th anniversary of the *PMP* Hall of Fame, we're celebrating the achievements of 87 industry legends and leaders in a beautifully bound 200+-page book (available through *PMP*'s online bookstore after this year's induction ceremony).

- 2008** Dr. Bobby Corrigan
Norm Goldenberg
Mark Lacey
Harvey Massey
- 2009** Al & Sandee Burger
Jacques Hess
Motokazu Hirao
Joe Thomas
- 2010** Paul K. Adams
Allen James
Bob Kunst
Charles Pomerantz
Dr. Charles Wright
- 2011** Bill Blasingame Sr.
Julius C. Ehrlich
Dr. Roger Gold
Victor Hammel
Raymond "Ed" Scherzinger
- 2012** Dr. Jerome Goddard
George Hockenyos
James A. Nelson
Dr. Mike Potter
Gary W. Rollins
- 2013** Greg Baumann
Stoy Hedges
Vern McKinzie
Bob Rosenberg
Dr. Thomas Elliot Snyder
Dr. Claude Thomas
- 2014** Ed Bradbury
Gene Harrington
Don Reiersen
Dempsey R. Sapp Sr.
- 2015** John R. Cook Sr.
Noad Corley
Dr. Laurel Hansen
Dr. Phil Koehler
- 2016** Dr. Vernard Lewis
Richard Sameth
Vern Toblan
Lawrence Treleven

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What a blast

Dr. Vernard Lewis reflects on a 26-year career at the University of California, Berkeley. By Jerry Mix | Editor-at-large

Saying that he's "had a blast," Dr. Vernard Lewis reminisced with *Pest Management Professional* (PMP) about his 26-year career as an entomologist at the University of California, Berkeley's Richmond Field Station.

It's a good time for Dr. Lewis to look back, because he plans to retire from Berkeley in June 2017. Until then, he has one more big "blast" coming on Oct. 17, when he will be inducted into PMP's Hall of Fame.

"I've been blessed with high energy and curiosity, but now it's time for some young blood to come and take this position to the next level," he says. "I'm ready to leave because I'm tired."

Dr. Lewis, 65, was bitten by the entomology bug at age 5, and collected insects in kindergarten.

The Minnesota native spent seven years with his grandparents in Fresno, Calif., then moved back to Minneapolis for middle school and high school. As the oldest of 10, his bug-collecting hobby was something that was his alone, something he didn't have to share.

When high school counselors told Dr. Lewis he wasn't smart enough to go to college, he decided to prove them wrong. He arrived at Berkeley as an undergrad in 1972, kicking off what has been nearly a half-century relationship with the university.

At Berkeley, Dr. Lewis earned his bachelor's degree in agricultural sciences in 1975, his master's degree in entomology in 1979, and his Ph.D. in 1989. He joined the Berkeley faculty in urban entomology in 1990. He recalls how happy he was to be offered the job.

"They were looking for an urban entomologist and they never had an African-American faculty member in my college. So, here I am," Dr. Lewis says. "With me, you can check all kinds of boxes."

To help pay for his doctoral studies, he worked at San Quentin Prison as the head of



the pest management department from 1986 to 1988 (*Editor's Note: See PMP's June cover story for more on his experience there*).

Dr. Lewis was also part-owner of IPM Systems at that time, and says he has maintained his state

CONTINUED ON PAGE 54

PHOTOS: DR. VERNARD LEWIS

PMP HALL OF FAME 2016

NAME: Dr. Vernard R. Lewis

COMPANY: University of California, Berkeley

TITLE: Cooperative Extension Entomologist

YEARS IN PEST MANAGEMENT: 35

KEY POSITIONS HELD: Pest management department head at San Quentin Prison, owner of IPM Systems, entomology professor

CROWING ACHIEVEMENTS: Getting funding for, and overseeing the construction of, the research structure "Villa Termiti," Chairman of the United Nations Global Termite Expert Group

A teenaged Dr. Lewis, second from left, back row, with his siblings — circa 1967.



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DID YOU KNOW?

Dr. Lewis is a founding member of the Global Termite Expert Group, which was put together by the United Nations. The 20-member group from around the world worked together on projects from 2000-2008. "Actually, I was the chairman of that group," he says. "Maybe no one else wanted to be chairman; I was crazy enough to take it."

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 52
pest control licenses since 1982.

"San Quentin is a tough place," he says, explaining how he ran the pest management program there. "I think I had the most success in modernizing their program and using more modern tools."

Dr. Lewis has vivid memories of battling bed bugs in the 1980s at the prison.

"The inmates treated me pretty well, because if you disrespected me, you'd have to sit there with those bugs," he says. "That's a hard way to go — but prisons are hard. There aren't any choir boys in there."

Dr. Lewis says he tried to instill responsibility when training the inmate work crews he worked with at San Quentin.

"I would characterize my many years as a pest control operator as being hard work that



demanded I employ many skills," he says. "It enabled me to help many people in need."

ACADEMIC LIAISON

Dr. Lewis says he is an urban entomologist.

"IPM [integrated pest management] guys have been doing this for decades," he says. "I have a foot in both worlds — the university and pest control."

His university "foot" got the Villa Termiti built on the Berkeley campus, says Dr. Lewis. The 400-sq.-ft. wooden building — defined as "The House of the Termite" — is used to test for drywood termite detection and control methods.

"Termites are by far the easiest insects to do research on, but with bed bugs, there

CONTINUED ON PAGE 56

PHOTO: DR. VERNARD LEWIS



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Dr. Lewis was in Japan on sabbatical leave from the University of California in 2011, when that country was hit by a major tragedy. "I was a three-hour bullet-train ride away from the nuclear plant that caused a major part of the country's problems," he says. Dr. Lewis was stationed at Kyoto University, working as an urban entomologist.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 54 is a lot more drama," he says. "I got drafted into conducting bed bug research. I had a patent pending on a bed bug bait, but I couldn't get anyone to license it."

Over the past 26 years, Dr. Lewis has given more than 700 entomology presentations, an estimated 65 percent of them directed toward pest management professionals (PMPs) to assist them with their training and development programs.

Dr. Lewis now finds himself concerned with his faculty position at Berkeley.

"When I go, I'll be the last termite expert in the system for a while," he laments. While he hasn't planned on taking on any work post-retirement, he says he might be swayed. "If someone could come up with



At left, Dr. Lewis "conducts" a termite inspection in 1991. Above, he still crawls under the occasional house before retirement.

a big enough project, and there's financial incentive, I could be talked into working."

Until that project materializes, Dr. Lewis has other plans: "When I retire, I might go back to bowling and golf. I also have a grandson who is high-energy to keep me busy." PMP

You can reach MIX, a 2005 Hall of Famer, at pmpeditor@northcoastmedia.net.

PHOTOS: DR. VERNARD LEWIS

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A lifetime of industry dedication

You might say Dick Sameth was born into the pest management profession. He and his brother Bob picked up where his father, grandfather and aunt left off.

In 1928, their father, J.E. Sameth, launched Western Pest Services with their grandfather Maurice and Aunt Ailene. When J.E. retired in 1998 (the year the then-91-year-old was inducted into the *PMP* Hall of Fame), he left the company in the capable hands of sons Dick, who served as vice president; Bob, who was president; and daughter Jeanne Burke, the company's corporate secretary.

A FAMILY AFFAIR

Dick Sameth got into the family business in 1955, handling

PMP HALL OF FAME 2016

NAME: Dick Sameth

YEARS IN BUSINESS: 49

KEY POSITIONS HELD: Vice President, Western Pest Services; NPMA President 1996-97

MAJOR INDUSTRY CONTRIBUTIONS: Grew Western Pest Services into one of the largest pest management companies in the country; sold the company to Rollins Inc. long before mergers and acquisitions were common in the pest management industry; instrumental in ensuring FIFRA was written with pest industry input; also oversaw a great deal of positive change in NPMA during his presidency and left the association with surplus revenue.

Dick Sameth, who helped Western Pest Services become the company it is today, is *PMP's* first second-generation Hall of Famer – his father, J.E. Sameth, was inducted in 1998. By Diane Sofranec | Managing Editor

termite jobs while in high school. He attended Dartmouth College and graduated with a bachelor's degree in zoology. He then went to the Amos Tuck School of Business Administration to earn his bachelor's of arts degree in business administration.

Sameth says he liked the social interaction with customers and his fellow employees. At the time, many workers emigrated from Scotland and settled in New Jersey. They found work at the Nairn Linoleum factory in Kearny, near Western's office.

"We were able to hire some very hardworking, loyal people," he recalls. "They were still there when I started work in 1960, but they were just phasing out. They were the backbone of the company, and they were wonderful people."

Western has always had a reputation for hiring dedicated, loyal employees. Sameth attributes the low turnover to excellent supervision and training.

"Dad was the driving force on that in our company," Sameth says. "He thoroughly believed in it."

The company assigned one



supervisor for every seven technicians. The supervisor's sole job was to go out in the field and help new employees as well as long-time employees.

"We spent a lot of money as well as time, and that kept our employee turnover down," Sameth says. "It also kept our customer turnover down."

Western continued to grow, servicing customers in New

CONTINUED ON PAGE 60

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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 58

Jersey, New York, Delaware and Pennsylvania. It established a distribution company in 1946 and a fumigation division in 1983. Before long, it was one of the largest pest management firms in the country.

The company's success made it attractive to firms looking to merge, and that's exactly what happened in 2004. Rollins Inc. came calling, making Western a wholly owned subsidiary.

"That was really the start of it all," Sameth says. "Now you see mergers of companies, mergers of suppliers."

Sameth retired from Western in 2004. He still keeps up with the industry, however, attending association meetings about every other year.

SERVING THE INDUSTRY

Sameth says he enjoyed being involved in the political side of the pest management industry, and his prominent involvement was another factor in his inclusion in the *PMP* Hall of Fame.

In the 1970s, when the National Pest Control Association (now the National Pest Management Association, or NPMA) staff did not have strong

Dick Sameth (far right) poses on the "Freshman Fence" with his parents in 1955, the year he entered Dartmouth College.



government ties, he worked with fellow *PMP* Hall of Famers Bob Russell, director of government relations at Orkin (1997) and Charlie Hromada, vice president of government relations for Terminix International (1998) to ensure the U.S. Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) would not hamper pest management efforts.

"I worked with them for three or four years; we would meet in Washington, D.C., or talk on the phone all the time," Sameth recalls. "Both companies [Orkin and Terminix] had a lot of interest in making sure the regulations that were put forth were in the best interest of not only our industry, but the public as well."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 62

PHOTO: DICK SAMETH



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DID YOU KNOW?

The home Dick Sameth owns in Mantoloking, N.J., sustained significant damage when Hurricane Sandy struck in 2012. It took more than three years to rebuild. "We lost everything on the first floor of the house," he says. "Nobody was killed. That's the important thing." It has taken the community even longer to get back to normal, however, Dick reports.

Sameth was elected president of the NPMA for the 1996-1997 term. Under his watch, the NPMA returned policy-making powers to the board of directors, implemented a joint state partnership campaign to help boost membership, and mounted a public awareness campaign.

While at the NPMA, he worked closely with Ward Combs, the founder of Presto-X, and Larry Treleven, co-owner of Sprague Pest Solutions and a fellow 2016 *PMP* Hall of Fame inductee. At the end of his tenure, Sameth left the NPMA with a surplus of funds — a feat not accomplished in years.

Sameth is quick to point out that he was able to participate in industry activities so fully because of his brother's hard work in keeping Western thriving during his absences. It should come as no surprise, then, that what Sameth says he enjoys most about the pest management industry is the willingness of people to exchange information among one another.



"Even competitors share information. It was true in my dad's time, it was true when I was working, and it's true today," he adds. "There are a lot of great people in the industry."

Boating is one of Dick and Polly Sameth's favorite pastimes.

Now that he's retired, Sameth splits his time between Mantoloking, N.J. and Vero Beach, Fla., where he enjoys sailing, boating, fishing and biking. He keeps busy by staying involved. For instance, he's vice president of the Moorings Yacht & Country Club. He also spends time with wife Polly, their two sons, two daughters and six grandchildren. *PMP*

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PHOTO: DICK SAMETH

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Association *ambassador*

Larry Treleven has spent practically his entire life serving in leadership roles, from his family company's board of directors to the president of the NPMA. By Will Nepper | Senior Editor

By his own account, Larry Treleven has been associated with the pest management industry in some way since he “was old enough to fog a mirror.” And maybe even longer than that when you consider, after his birth in 1948, he was driven home from the hospital in his father’s Sprague Pest Solutions service vehicle.

“I joined Sprague on April Fool’s Day of 1971,” Treleven adds. “And my dad liked to make a big deal of that.”

In his early role as a technician with the Tacoma, Wash.-based company, Treleven serviced bars, hotels and restaurants, doing ant, flea and termite inspections.

Now, decades later, Treleven is vice president and co-owns Sprague with his brother, Alfie.

He’s also served on the Sprague board of directors for 45 years. But none of this landed in Larry Treleven’s lap: He earned his place in the company after also serving as a Sprague sales associate and a branch manager.

“I wore all kinds of hats doing different jobs at Sprague because we only had three other people in the company,” he says.

ONE LEADER, MULTIPLE HONORS

Treleven held the president’s position for a number of years before stepping back to divide the responsibilities of running the company with Alfie.

“During these years, I was also president of the Washington State Pest Control Association on four separate occasions and president of the Oregon Pest Control Association,” Treleven says, adding that he continues to serve on those governing boards as well as the board for the Environmental Care Association of Idaho. In Colorado, he sits on the state association’s Government Affairs Committee.

That’s an impressive list of roles to have played, but if you know of Treleven, it’s probably because he was president of the National Pest Management Association (NPMA) from 1994 to 1995.

“I’ve served in every leadership role in the national association



since I became involved with it in 1972,” he says.

One might consider that to be enough governing roles in pest management to fill three lifetimes — but wait! There’s more. Treleven is also recognized as a founding member of the Professional Pest Management Alliance (PPMA) and continues to serve as a state public affairs representative (SPAR) of NPMA for Washington, Oregon and Idaho.

A NEW DIRECTION

However, despite being peripherally connected to the pest industry since his ride home from the hospital, for years Treleven set his sights on a far different future.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 66

PMP HALL OF FAME 2016

NAME: Larry Treleven

YEARS IN PEST MANAGEMENT: 45 years

KEY POSITIONS HELD: Sprague technician, sales associate and branch manager; Sprague president and then co-president with brother Alfie Treleven

MAJOR INDUSTRY CONTRIBUTIONS: Served as president of the Washington State Pest Control Association, the Oregon Pest Control Association and the National Pest Management Association (1994-1995); founding member of the Professional Pest Management Alliance (PPMA)

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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 64

Growing up in the north end of Tacoma, Treleven attests to having an idyllic childhood — boating on Puget Sound, enjoying summers at his grandfather’s beach in Gig Harbor and playing sports. During this time, Treleven was attending St. Edwards Seminary where he considered becoming a Catholic priest.

“But after all of those years of Catholic school, I decided I didn’t want to be a priest and registered at the ‘pagan’ institution of the University of Washington (UW),” Treleven teases. “It blew my mother’s mind that I would go there, coming from a priesthood education.”

While mulling over the idea of becoming a teacher, Treleven was working part-time for the family business — one his grandfather, A.H. Treleven Sr., purchased in 1931 from founder W.B. Sprague. His father, A.H. Treleven Jr., joined in 1937.

“I thought it was interesting, going to all the food processing plants, mills and factories,” Treleven says. “I’d get immediate gratification because we



Above, Treleven greets retired CEO (and fellow Hall of Famer) Bob Rosenberg at PestWorld. Left, he jokes around in the Sprague home office parking lot.



would be able to solve so many problems for people. Many of those people weren’t just our clients, they were also our friends in the community.”

THE BUSINESS OF PEOPLE

When his father encouraged Treleven to get involved with the Washington State Pest Control

CONTINUED ON PAGE 68

PHOTOS: LARRY TRELEVEN

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Creating value, growing together

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 66

Association, the Pacific Northwest Pest Management Conference and the National Pest Control Association (now, the NPMA), he found that encouragement and inspiration was all around him.

He cites fellow *Pest Management Professional* Hall of Famers Norman Cooper (1999), John Cook Sr. (2015), and Red Tindol (2000) among many of the strong influences and mentors along the way that helped guide him in the industry.

“I recognized that the industry is full of good people and I wanted to remain a part of it,” he says.

So he did. And now, Treleven — like many of the professionals who inspired him — is working to bring others into the fold. In fact, he counts this among his greatest achievements in the industry, a fact that’s especially significant when you consider his above-mentioned resume.

“Recruiting and nurturing great people in our industry is important to me,” Treleven says. “There’s

The Treleven family at a recent get-together.



a lot of satisfaction in realizing that we’ve inspired and encouraged some of the fourth generation of our family to join the organization.

“There’s a certain amount of family pride in having an organization run for 90 years,” he concludes. “To know that when my turn is up, that the legacy will continue in capable caring hands with the fourth generation — that’s a special thing.” PMP

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The pilot of *Pi Chi Omega*

Vern Toblan was instrumental in guiding the industry fraternity into the 21st century. By Heather Gooch | Editor

How did a Swiss national, who taught ballroom dancing in Canada, end up in charge of a U.S.-based business fraternity for pest management professionals? For Vern E. Toblan, it was a combination of talent, tenacity, and a little bit of serendipity.

Toblan was born March 5, 1930 in Zurich as Werner Hugentobler. After studying agriculture under the Farm School project in Strickhof, Switzerland, he immigrated to Canada in 1953. He went there instead of the U.S. because the waiting list was too long for the latter. As he told *Pest Management Professional (PMP)*

Editor At-Large Jerry Mix in 2008, "I figured that Canada is close to the United States, and so sooner or later I'd make it." He came to the U.S. in the late 1970s.

A variety of jobs followed, including farmhand, ambulance driver and milkman. In his 2008 *PMP* interview, Toblan revealed he became a telephone lineman only because he was nearby when the man doing the job fell off the pole and broke his leg. Toblan filled in for the man during recovery.

A CAREER IN PESTICIDES

It was during a teaching stint at the Arthur Murray Dance Studio in Regina, Saskatchewan, where he met his wife, Kathleen Lannan, who preceded him in death. They married in 1960 and had daughter Brenna in 1965 and son Blair in 1971.

In 1958, Toblan was able to put his agricultural background to use: He answered a want ad in the newspaper and thus began his career in pesticide sales with Chipman Chemical, a legacy company of Bayer. At the time, Chipman was the exclusive distributor in Canada for Fisons Ltd., a British company that is also a legacy company of Bayer.



Toblan told *PMP* in 2008 that when Fisons took distribution in-house in the late 1960s, he went with them.

"In 1973, I was involved in the development of Ficam," he said, referring to the bendiocarb-based pesticide. "My first job along that line was to do a survey in North America of the pest control industry to figure out how best to distribute that product in this section of the world. I spent two years and 500,000 travel miles visiting pest

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PMP HALL OF FAME 2016

NAME: Vern Toblan

YEARS IN BUSINESS: 56

KEY POSITIONS HELD: Industry Sales Rep 1958-1995, Industry Consultant 1995-2014, Executive Director, Pi Chi Omega, 2000-2014

MAJOR INDUSTRY CONTRIBUTIONS: Grew annual scholarship fund from \$50,000 to more than \$150,000; known as "Mr. Ficam" for his sales support of the pesticide; enthusiastic ambassador of Pi Chi Omega



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control firms and universities to devise a marketing plan for Ficam.

“That’s when I started my education work,” Toblan said. “I figured the best way to sell things was to educate people on how to use it.”

After retirement in 1995, Toblan launched a second career as an industry consultant, T&L Consulting, in which he traveled worldwide hosting educational seminars on various products. Among his projects was a five-year contract with B&G Equipment Co. for work in Europe and the Middle East. At the heart of it all, of course, was educating the end user, the technicians.

PI CHI CONNECTION

As a supplier representative to the pest management industry, it only made sense for Toblan to join the industry’s business fraternity, Pi Chi Omega. He did so in 1979, and served as president from 1992-93. Founded on the Purdue University campus in 1955, the fraternity continues its mission today of encouraging and promoting pest management education among professionals.

By 2000, when Dr. Bill Jackson of Ohio’s Bowling Green State University wanted to retire from his Pi Chi Omega executive director duties, he looked to Toblan to take the fraternity to the next level.

“Bill was a good friend and mentor, and certainly instrumental in recruiting me to be his successor,” Toblan noted at the time of Dr. Jackson’s death in 2010.

Likewise, Toblan was a friend and mentor to many in the industry — as Dale Baker, vice president of J.T. Eaton & Co., Twinsburg, Ohio, and current Pi Chi Omega president, attests.

“Vern was a straight shooter, who could call people out without malice or judgment. I really admired that about him. That, and the way that he would have a highball during the meetings,” Baker says with a chuckle, noting that Toblan was reminiscent of his grandfather, fellow *PMP* Hall of Famer Stanley Z. Baker, in many ways.

Dale Baker recalled his first Pi Chi Omega meeting, which kicked off with a cocktail reception, as somewhat nerve-wracking. With a gathering of so many prestigious industry insiders, he didn’t want

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to say or do anything embarrassing, yet wasn't sure what to expect.

"Vern sat next to me and said 'Dale, you seem to be without a drink?'" Baker says. "He said it with a mischievous smile, like he knew what I was thinking or like when you get someone in a checkmate. Anyway, that question — more like a comment — and that smile and him sitting next to me was a pretty awesome moment."

Toblan took immense pride in his work for the fraternity, Baker says, and his enthusiasm was contagious. "When Vern passed, it became painfully obvious to all of us how much he did for the organization," he says. "His commitment was unquestionable. His passion was inspirational. His legacy is undeniable. Our chain is one link shorter."

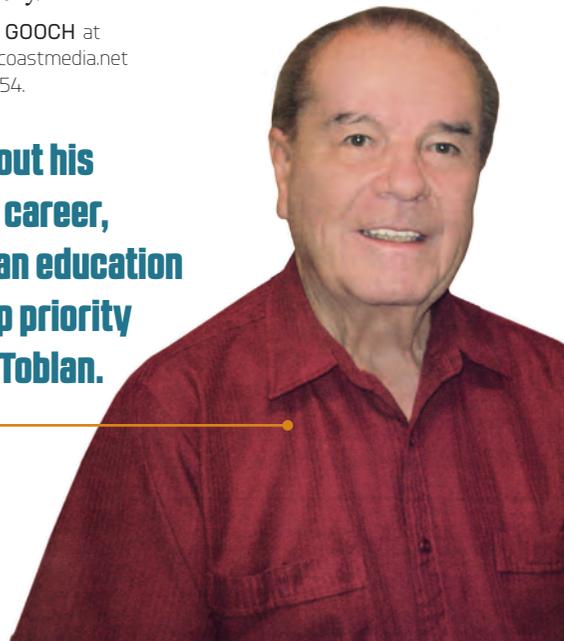
On Aug. 23, 2014, Toblan died peacefully in Middletown, Del. at age 84, with family at his side. He had been caretaker of Pi Chi Omega to the very end of his life.

Professional, but never one to take things too seriously, even his last wishes were eloquently

expressed at the time by daughter Brenna Toblan. Rather than a formal funeral, she said, "What he would want would be for all of you to go out and have a good meal, and maybe raise a glass of wine to his memory." PMP

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Throughout his industry career, technician education was a top priority for Vern Toblan.



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By Charles Russell

The decision to sell our business, Eradico Services in Novi, Mich., last year to Rentokil Steritech was not an easy one. We had to answer questions and concerns about timing, family, employees, careers, dreams and desires. Yet, it had become clear to us that our \$10 million business was going to have to be run differently if we were going to reach

the \$20 million stage. We would need a much greater capital and human resources investment, for instance. We also knew the difficulty we would face in the near future of trying to transition our second-generation business to a third generation of owners from three different families.

My brother Steve and I have done a fair amount of acquisitions over our careers, and we understood the basics of what selling our business would take. However, we never had experience with a business of our size and scope. This would also be the first time we found ourselves on the selling side of the table. We struggled with whether we could do this on our own successfully.

There are very specific times when I am able to look back over my career and recognize the pivotal nature of decision-making at that moment in time. Calling in Lance Tullius of Tullius Partners, someone whom we have known for the better part of 15 years, was one of

the most important and best decisions we could have made.

There are three aspects of the Tullius Partners involvement that would prove to be vital to the overall success of our transaction:

1. Positioning. Tullius Partners employs a very specific and detailed system to position a company properly for sale.

The exhaustive time, effort and careful approach to detail would prove to be extremely valuable and help us to secure the best possible value for our business.

They first spent the time getting to know the ins and outs of our business — not just the financials, but also the differentiators of our business to identify the

items strategic buyers would find important. They learned about the company so they could identify who the best buyers would be.

2. Negotiation. This starts well before the first meeting with potential buyers. Lance acted as our representative, well before the potential buyers even know our name. He identified the best buyers based upon each company's strategic initiatives, growth strategies and individual market profile. During the negotiation process, Lance proved invaluable. He helped us to take the emotion out of it and kept us on an even keel. Having someone of Lance's caliber, whom the buyers knew and trusted, represent us was a huge benefit.

3. Due Diligence. Just because an offer has been accepted doesn't mean you will get to a close. The next critical component to a successful transaction is the due diligence process. Being publicly traded, Rentokil Steritech introduced us to a segment of business with which we were very unfamiliar. There are certain requirements a publicly traded firm has to satisfy during the due diligence process. Tullius Partners' use of dedicated personnel and their data collection process enabled us to provide Rentokil Steritech with the reports and information it needed, in a timely and orderly fashion. Their thorough and organized system helped us satisfy what was needed in order to get to a successful transaction.

These days, Russell, a former president of the Michigan Pest Control Association, and his brother Steve offer business and technical support to Weed Man lawn care franchises nationwide. He may be reached at russellc@eradicoservices.com.



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